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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 002801

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN UNAMID DEPLOYMENT READINESS REPORT #1

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 2658  
[1](#)B. ADDIS ABABA 2478  
[1](#)C. SECSTATE 100304

Classified By: CDA Deborah Malac. Reason: 1.4 (B) and (D).

First Battalion's Advance Team on the Ground in Darfur  
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[1](#)1. (C/NF) Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) foreign liaison officer Brigadier General Hassan told the DATT on October 2 that the ENDF has an advance element of 360 troops in Darfur which includes infantry and engineers. However, the first battalion's equipment has yet to arrive in Darfur. It was first held up at Port Sudan, and is now stuck in Al Obayyid. ENDF CHOD General Samora has repeatedly complained that the UN's timelines for personnel deployment and equipment shipment are on two separate timelines with no relationship with each other. The first battalion remains encamped at Fiche, Ethiopia awaiting deployment orders.

ACOTA Training for Second Battalion Delayed  
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[1](#)2. (C/NF) At the ENDF's request, the ACOTA training for the second battalion, originally scheduled to begin on October 6, has been delayed for at least several weeks. The ENDF wants to obtain an official deployment date from the UN before beginning the training. BG Hassan has also asked if it were possible to deploy the second battalion, and its equipment, directly from Addis Ababa to Al Fashir by air to avoid future logistics logjams.

Helicopter Deployment Remains an Issue  
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[1](#)3. (C/NF) BG Hassan reconfirmed with the DATT on October 2 that Ethiopia is planning to deploy four MI-35 HIND gunships and two MI-17 HIP transports, but as previously reported (REF B) the night vision requirement remains problematic. Unless UNDPKO waives the night vision requirement, Ethiopia will require assistance to upgrade its MI-17s. Ethiopian Air Force Chief of Staff Major General Molla told EmbOffs on August 28 that the gunships were in the process of being upgraded for night vision, but that the transports were not. MG Molla also requested that the United States provide Ethiopia with the INMARSAT portable earth station noted in the requirements.

[1](#)4. (C/NF) The problem of command and control of the helicopters once deployed to Darfur has yet to be resolved. Both Prime Minister Meles (REF A) and General Samora continue

to insist that the helos be deployed in Ethiopia's sector where they would only be used by Ethiopian troops. General Samora, who had originally insisted that he be allowed to send armor and artillery to Darfur, now views the gunships as his troops' only fire support. He intends the transports for search and rescue and medevac missions. Meles and Samora are convinced that their troops will become the target for Eritrean supported Darfur rebels, and Samora wants his troops to be able to defeat anyone who attacks them. At the same time Meles and Samora do not trust the UN and the other UNAMID forces to come to the ENDF's assistance in an emergency.

Comment

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15. (C/NF) From Post's varied engagement with the Ethiopian government on UNAMID deployment, it has become apparent that the government is not on the same page with itself regarding when and what Ethiopia will send to Darfur. We have found it difficult to find two officials who can provide information that is not contradictory. This is particularly true of the helicopters, making it difficult to get precise information and details regarding the ENDF deployment. Ethiopian officials have from time to time expressed consideration of sending six MI-17s to Darfur, but as of yet we do not believe this is a serious offer. Ethiopian officials have proven to be unable or unwilling to provide actual deployment dates or timelines. We also question whether Ethiopia's representatives in New York are communicating accurately with UNDPKO or with Addis Ababa.

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16. (C/NF) Post understands that the deployment of transport helicopters is a critical priority and will continue to press the Ethiopian government on this issue. Post requests that Washington consider sending a helicopter specialist to Addis Ababa who can examine Ethiopia's MI-17s in order to determine precisely what would be needed to render the aircraft night vision compatible. End Comment.

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